



**Amir Tsarfati**  
**The Jordan River**

<https://youtu.be/vIHxjWE9jdM>

So here we are right at the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized by John. To the best of



my knowledge, John wasn't a Baptist; John was a Jewish descendent of a priestly family who called for repentance. He was a voice calling in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." And Jesus Himself was indeed the one for whom John prepared the way.



Right here at this very location not only the baptism of Jesus took place, but also a very significant event in the history of Israel, the crossing of the River Jordan from the way of wandering in the

desert into the Promised Land. The Jordan River is a river that flows all the way from below Mount Hermon up in the northernmost part of the country. In fact, the waters of the River Jordan are actually the melting snows of Mount Hermon as they pop out of the ground from three different streams and form into a river. The main headwater of the River Jordan is the Dan. And, therefore, the name of the Jordan is Yar-Dan, descending from Dan. These are the actual two words that are comprised in the Hebrew language: "descending from Dan." And so, the River Jordan flows all



the way from the northern part of the country, enters into the Sea of Galilee, leaves the Sea, and finds its way after 100 miles of winding stream, all the way to this point just about a mile away from the Dead Sea which is the dead-end of that river. This is the very

location where Joshua had the children of Israel encamped just prior to the entry into that Promised Land.

We know that Moses was on Mount Nebo. Moses could not enter the Promised Land. We know that Joshua was commissioned to take the mantle, and to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. And that was a very interesting moment in the history of Israel that in a very beautiful way parallels to that which happened here as Jesus approached this place.

We know that Jesus Himself came to this place and is where He started his public ministry. Jesus approached as John was calling for baptism for repentance and the minute John saw Jesus he said, “**...Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” (John 1:29) It’s interesting that for the Jewish mindset the Lamb of God is something that brings to their mind the Passover lamb. That is the lamb that has to be slaughtered. That is the lamb that eventually enabled the Jewish people to be free from slavery, to have the blood on their doorposts so the angel of the Lord will pass over their houses. While the Egyptians were mourning over the death of their firstborn, the Israelites were able to start the journey, to start the Exodus from the land of slavery into the Promised Land. And so, when John looks at Jesus and says, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”, John in his mind can see the Passover lamb. And that beautiful Exodus story obviously is related to this site as the children of Israel right at this point, are officially ending the Exodus from Egypt, and officially beginning the entry into the Promised Land.

As Jesus goes into the waters of the River Jordan, this is an amazing display, maybe for the first time of the entire Trinity: Jesus the Son steps into the water; God the Father says, “This is My Son, My Beloved”; and the Holy Spirit in the shape of a white dove is landing on Jesus’ shoulder (Matthew 3:16). What an amazing display of the Trinity of God, of the Godhead Himself

right here in this location. But 1,500 years earlier another amazing display took place here. The Bible says that as the children of Israel set their feet right into the waters of the River Jordan, the River Jordan rolled all the way back, and a stack of, or a pile of water went all the way up to the sky (Joshua 3:16). More than one million Israelites had to cross the River Jordan at the same time from the east into the Promised Land to the west. What an amazing display of the power of God, of the might of God, of the strength of God, and of the sovereignty of God. Jericho is just on the other side. The Bible says that the children of Israel were exactly opposite of Jericho. We are right now exactly, geographically, opposite the city of Jericho.

I find it amazing to see more parallels between the stories in preparation for the entrance into the Land. It was a task of the priests to carry the ark of the covenant, and to step by faith into the waters of the River Jordan. You might find it hard to believe, but the River Jordan that is right now here below me—right next to the Jordanian side where there are some Jordanian soldiers right now—can get to a level that will leave me under the water right now. In fact, while being the deputy governor of Jericho and the entire Jordan Valley, I experienced myself on a visit to this very site where the waters of the river were above my height right now. The Bible tells us in the book of Joshua chapter 3 (Joshua 3:15) that as the children of Israel were about to cross into the Promised Land, the River Jordan at that time was overflowing—was actually overflowing on both sides. This was right after the rainy season. It was heavy, heavy rains that filled the Sea of Galilee, that filled Mount Hermon with snow, and of course created a very, very wild stream in the River Jordan that eventually brought the water all the way here in a level that was spectacular. It takes a lot of courage to set your foot into waters that deep, especially as you carry an object that is so heavy.

The ark of the covenant carries within it the symbols of the sinful nature of Israel. It carries the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, tablets that were given because of the sinful nature of people, and these are the laws that the Lord God prescribed knowing the sinful heart of mankind. It also contained a jar of manna, a way of showing how complaining the children of Israel were in wanting to return back to the pot of meat in Egypt, forgetting the grace and all the provision of God in the desert. So God reminded them of that with a jar of manna. And of course, the staff of Aaron that was budding as a way to show the children of Israel that they had a lack of faith, and He had to show them signs and wonders, through or with or using that staff so they would eventually believe. Lack of faith, lack of thanksgiving, and a lot of sinful thoughts in their hearts and in their minds, all these together were represented with all the objects that were inside the ark of the covenant. In general, the sin of the world is represented within the ark of the covenant.

So I find it very interesting that the children of Israel had to step into the deep water of the Jordan River right here on their way into the Promised Land. That was of course almost 1,500 years prior to the coming of Jesus to go through the waters of the River Jordan at that time. I find it amazing to see the parallels between the two as Jesus coming to the waters of the River Jordan not really having to go through the water. If you think about it, Jesus didn't have to be baptized. It's not that He had sinned, and He had to be baptized for the remission of sins. But Jesus wanted to set an example for all of us just as God rested on the seventh day not because He was too tired, but He knows our abilities, He knows our capacity, and He wanted us to learn how to rest. In the same manner, Jesus came and went through the water of the River in order to show all of us a great example of what we will eventually have to do in order to show a public display of our faith in Him. Not just faith in Him, but a public display of our identification with His death and with His

resurrection, dying to our old man with the old nature, the sinful nature, and resurrecting with Him with our sins are forgotten and forgiven and becoming a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is amazing to see that as we go through the water, we are symbolically leaving our sinful life in the water as we enter into our promised land into that which God promised us, a life of freedom in Christ. The Bible says that he who has the Son is free indeed (John 8:36). The children of Israel left the land of bondage, the land of slavery and entered into their Promised Land. As we go through the water, as Jesus told us to go or to do so, we leave our sinful life in the water, and we enter our own promised land.

It's also beautiful to see how in Jesus' case right after the baptism, the Bible says that the Spirit took Jesus to the desert, the desert of temptation. Joshua warned the children of Israel that the minute after they crossed the river, and entered into their Promised Land, the temptation is waiting around the corner. And this is why Joshua said, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." But he warned the people of Israel there will be temptations, there will be so many



things in that land that might cause you not to follow the Lord anymore. It is the Word of God that we should hold onto, it is the promises of God that we should hold onto. It is the will of God that we should be attuned to in order to stand fast, and to be strong, sustain, and resist all temptation. As we know Jesus in the desert of temptation was not tempted by God. God allowed that temptation, but the temptation never comes from God, it comes from Satan himself. Temptation builds character if we stand and resist it. This is a test, and we will never ever be able to stand that test if we're not grounded in the Word of God. Jesus used the Word of God to push Satan aside and to resist temptation. The children of Israel were warned by Joshua right here to hold onto the Word of God,

to meditate on it day and night, so they would be able to resist temptation as they enter into the Promised Land.

Where are you in your faith? Where are you in your walk with the Lord? Have you been baptized? Did your baptism really symbolize the death of your old person and the identification with Jesus' death? And did you come out of the water with the power of His Resurrection? Are you a new creation in Christ? Do you know the Word of God so once you enter into your promised land, and when temptation is around the corner you can resist it and be strong? It's time for you to cross the Jordan of your life. It's time for you to have that major step of faith into the water, into the unknown sometimes, knowing that God is there to take care of you. It's time for you to leave the mentality of bondage, fear, and slavery behind and enter your promised land. It's time for you to get ready, to know that temptation is around the corner, but to be grounded in the Word. It's time for you to get over the fears and hold on with faith to that which is promised to you by the Lord, to leave behind you and abandon bad habits, bad company and to enter into your promised land. If there is one thing that Joshua said to the people of Israel is, "Be courageous. Do not fear." Courage can come from the Lord; you just need to ask for it. And as **Philippians 4:19** says, "19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" Cross your Jordan River, enter by faith into your promised land, and withstand and resist temptation by holding onto the Word of God. God bless you.

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*\* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.*

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